



Macro-moths of Tentsmuir

S.T. Buckland

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I have included images of the species that I have been able to photograph in and around Tentsmuir. My thanks go to Nigel Voaden for getting me started on recording Tentsmuir moths, and for identifying the more difficult species — and some of the less difficult ones!

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5/October/2024

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Angle shades

A common species in a variety of habitats. This one was at Tentsmuir Point in late September, and is likely to be a migrant.





Angle-striped sallow

A rare species of birch woodland. Tentsmuir is the only place in Fife where this species occurs.





Anomalous

A rare species in Fife, this one was at Tentsmuir Point in early September 2023.





Antler moth

A common moth often seen on flowers in daylight.





Archer's dart

A locally-distributed species on coastal sand-dunes.





Autumn green carpet

A scarce species in Fife. The females hibernate, and emerge in spring. This one was at Tentsmuir Point at the start of May 2022.





Autumnal moth

A locally-distributed species of birch woods. This one was at Tentsmuir Point in mid-October 2022.





Autumnal rustic

Common in open habitats that are not intensively farmed.





Barred chestnut

A locally-distributed species of broadleaved woodland and moorland.





Barred red

A common species where conifers grow.





Barred straw

A common species in a variety of habitats.





Beautiful carpet

A scarce woodland species in Fife.





Beautiful golden Y

Common in a wide range of habitats.





Birch mocha

A rare species of birch woodland in Fife. This one was at Tentsmuir Point in late June 2023.



Black rustic

A common autumn species of grasslands and moorland.





Blue-bordered carpet

Common where mature conifers are present.





Bordered white

Common where mature conifers are present.





Brick

A scarce species in Fife, occurring mostly in broadleaved woodland. This was one of two at Tentsmuir Point in late September 2023.





Bright-line brown-eye

A common species in early summer. This one was in a bird hide at Edenside.



Brimstone moth

A common species that is often seen during the day.





Brindled pug

The brindled pug is a common species that emerges much earlier in the year than most pugs. This worn individual was at Tentsmuir Point at the start of May.



Broad-bordered yellow underwing

Fairly common, especially in broadleaved
woodland.





Broken-barred carpet

A fairly common species of broadleaved woodland.





Broom-tip

A scarce species, occurring where there are large areas of broom.





Brown-line bright-eye

A common grassland species.





Brown rustic

Common in broadleaved woodland.





Brown silver-line

Common where bracken occurs.





Brown-spot pinion

A common late-summer and autumn species in a range of habitats.





Buff footman

A locally-distributed species of broadleaved and mixed woodland that fairly recently spread to the area from the south.





Buff-tip

A large moth that looks remarkably like a broken birch twig when at rest. Not common in Fife.





Bulrush wainscot

This one was on the beach at Tentsmuir Point in early August 2023. As it was well away from its habitat of bulrushes, it was probably on the move.



Campion

A relatively scarce species in Fife which occurs where white, red or bladder campion or ragged robin grows. This one was by the education pavilion at Tentsmuir Point in late June 2023.





Canary-shouldered thorn

A pretty, late-summer and autumn woodland moth.





Chamomile shark

A locally-distributed species with a scattering of records in Fife. This one was at Morton Lochs in late April 2022.





Chestnut

Chestnuts overwinter as adults and are usually seen in autumn and early spring. The above shows one in autumn, while those below are faded ones in spring.





Chevron

A common species of moorland and open woodland.





Chimney sweeper

A fairly common day-flying moth that occurs mostly in damp habitats.



Cinnabar

A fairly common day-flying species that tends to be associated with rabbit-grazed grassland and sand-dunes. It can be numerous at Tentsmuir Point.





Clay

A common species in a range of habitats.





Cloaked minor

Locally-distributed and mostly coastal in Fife.



Clouded border

A common species of woodland, heathland and wetlands. Although a night-flying species, it can often be seen during the day.





Clouded-bordered brindle

A common species of grassy habitats.





Clouded drab

A common and very variable early-season species.





Clouded silver

This species of woodland and parkland is spreading northwards, and is becoming more common in Fife.





Coast dart

A rare species, restricted to large stretches of sand-dunes, such as at Tentsmuir Point.





Common carpet

A common species in a variety of habitats. Often seen during the day.





Common footman

A southern species that has spread up the east coast of Scotland.





Common heath

A common species on heathland and moorland. Often seen in daytime.





Common marbled carpet

A common species with variable markings, found in a wide variety of habitats.





Common pug

A common species in a variety of habitats.





Common quaker

A very common spring species.





Common rustic / lesser common rustic

Two species that cannot be separated in photos. They are common in grassland.





Common wainscot

A common grassland species.





Common wave

A common species of woodland.





Common white wave

A common species of broadleaved woodland.





Confused

A scarce species that occurs mostly along rocky coasts and on mountains, but which can occasionally be recorded on sand-dunes, as this one was, at Tentsmuir Point.



Copper underwing

A southern species that has recently spread north into Fife, and is now widespread.





Coxcomb prominent

Widespread but not numerous. Occurs mostly in woodland.





Dark arches

A common species in a variety of habitats.





Dark marbled carpet

A fairly common species, mostly in woodland, heathland and moorland.





Dark spectacle

A migrant moth. This one was at Tentsmuir Point on 17 June 2022, and is only the third record for Fife.





Dark tussock

A locally-distributed species of heathland, moorland and sand-dunes. These were at Tentsmuir Point.





December moth

A common late-autumn and early winter species of broadleaved woodland. The males have impressive antennae.





Dotted border

A common early-season woodland species with flightless females.



Dotted carpet

A locally-distributed species of mature woodland.





Dotted clay

A common summer species in a variety of habitats.





Double square-spot

A common species occurring in a variety of habitats.





Double-striped pug

A common species occurring in a variety of habitats.





Dun-bar

A common woodland species.





Dusky brocade

A common grassland species.





Dwarf pug

A common species of conifer plantations.





Ear moth

A common species mostly occurring in damp habitats. Often seen in daylight on flowers.





Early grey

A fairly local spring species.





Early thorn

An attractive and fairly common spring species.





Early tooth-striped

A fairly common early-season species where
sallows grow.





Elephant hawk-moth

An impressive yet relatively common hawk-moth that can sometimes be seen after dark hovering at flowers to feed.





Emperor moth

A spectacular species often found on heathland, moorland and mature sand-dunes. Day-flying males are easily mistaken for butterflies.





Engrailed

A fairly locally-distributed species of broadleaved woodland. The one above was at Tentsmuir Point in mid-April, and the one below at Morton Lochs in late May.





Feathered thorn

A fairly common autumn species of broadleaved woodland. They are named after the impressive antennae of the males.





Flame carpet

A common species, occurring in a wide range of habitats.





Flame shoulder

A common species in a wide range of habitats.





Flounced rustic

A common species of grassy habitats.





Foxglove pug

Common where foxgloves grow.





Fox moth

A locally-distributed species of moorland, heathland and sand-dunes. Caterpillars can sometimes be seen on paths at Tentsmuir Point and Kinshaldy. The caterpillar below right was sunning itself on a frosty morning at Kinshaldy, on 31 December 2019!





Frosted orange

A locally-distributed species in Fife, occurring in autumn. This one was at Tentsmuir Point in early October.





Garden tiger

A common species, occurring in a wide range of habitats.





Gold swift

A locally-distributed species of woodland and other habitats where bracken occurs. Male above and right, female below.





Golden-rod pug

A locally-distributed species occurring in a range of habitats.





Gothic

A scarce species, occurring in a range of mostly damp habitats.



Grass rivulet

A locally-distributed and declining species. These were at Tentsmuir Point (above and right) and Morton Lochs (below left) in mid-June.





Green arches

A sparsely-distributed species of broadleaved woodland in Fife.



Green-brindled crescent

A common autumn species of broadleaved woodland and gardens.





Green carpet

A common species in a range of habitats.





Green silver-line

A scarce species of broadleaved woodland in Fife. This female was at Morton Lochs in early June 2022.





Grey dagger

Widely distributed but never abundant.





Grey pine carpet

A common species of coniferous plantations.





Grey pug

A common species in a range of habitats.





Heart and club

A scarce and mostly coastal species in Fife, favouring sand dunes.





Heart and dart

A common summer species.





Hebrew character

A very common spring species.





Hedge rustic

A locally-distributed and declining species of open habitats in Fife.





Herald

A locally-distributed species that occurs where willows and poplars grow.





Ingrailed clay

A variable species that is fairly common, especially in woodland and heathland. This one was at Tentsmuir Point.



Iron prominent

A fairly common species of woodland and heathland.



July highflyer

A common species in a range of habitats.





Juniper pug

Common where juniper (wild or cultivated) grows. It can utilise a few other conifer species, which perhaps explains its presence at Tentsmuir Point, where juniper was once present, but not in recent years.



Larch pug

Fairly common where larches occur.



Large ear

Ear moths are common at Tentsmuir point. The large ear is much less common, and the two species are difficult to separate. This is probably a large ear, but the identity is uncertain!



Large emerald

A fairly common woodland species.





Large wainscot

Common in late summer and autumn where reedbeds occur.





Large yellow underwing

Very common in a wide range of habitats.





Least black arches

A locally-distributed woodland species.





Lempke's gold spot

A locally-distributed species of damp habitats.





Lesser broad-bordered yellow underwing

A common summer species.





Lesser swallow prominent

A fairly common species occurring in a range of habitats.





Lesser yellow underwing

A common species occurring in a range of habitats.





Light arches

A fairly common grassland species.





Light emerald

A common species, mostly in broadleaved woodland.





Lunar thorn

Similar to, but rarer than, the early thorn. Generally found in woodland.





Lunar underwing

A common grassland species in autumn.





Lychnis

A common summer species. Its caterpillars feed on red or white campion.





Lyme grass

A rare species, largely restricted to sand-dunes on the east coast of Britain. These were at Morton Lochs (below left) and Tentsmuir Point.





Map-winged swift

Generally a locally-distributed species, but it can be quite numerous at Tentsmuir. Its caterpillars usually feed on the roots of bracken. Its markings are variable.





Marbled beauty

A scarce species in Fife. Its caterpillars feed on lichen. This one was at Tentsmuir Point in early August 2023.



Marbled minor

A widespread but declining species.





March moth

A common early-season woodland species.





Middle-barred minor

A common species that prefers damp habitats. It can sometimes be seen on flowers during the day.





Miller

A scarce species in Fife, mostly associated with birch and alder. This one was at Morton Lochs in late June 2023.



Mother Shipton

A species of open, grassy habitats, that only flies in sunshine. It is a scarce species in Fife. This one was at Tentsmuir Point in late May 2020.



Mottled beauty

A common species in a range of habitats.





Mottled grey

A common early-season woodland moth.





Mottled rustic

A fairly common species in a range of lowland habitats.





Mouse moth

Common across a range of habitats. It runs like a mouse when threatened, hence the name. Dark when fresh, they fade later in the year (below).





Narrow-winged pug

A common species on heathland and moorland.





Neglected rustic

A locally-distributed species of heathland and moorland.





Northern spinach

Mostly a species of moorland and open woodland where bilberry grows.





November moth

A common autumn species, occurring in broadleaved woodland, hedgerows and gardens.





Nut-tree tussock

A common species of broadleaved woodland.





Nutmeg

An uncommon species in Scotland. This one was at Tayport Heath in early August 2023.





Ochreous pug

A species of pine forests and plantations which is not often recorded in Fife. This one was at Morton Lochs, and was quite worn, so that its identity is not certain.





Olive

A species of broadleaved woodland that is uncommon in Fife. This one was at Tentsmuir Point in late August 2021.



Pale brindled beauty

A common early-season woodland species.





Pale pinion

A locally-distributed species of broadleaved woodland which has spread to Scotland from the south. This was one of two at Tentsmuir Point in mid-April 2022.





Pale prominent

A locally-distributed species where willows or poplars grow.





Pale-shouldered brocade

A common species of woodland and moorland.





Peach blossom

Not a common species in Fife. It occurs in woodland and other habitats where brambles grow. The flash mis-fired on this shot!



Pebble prominent

A fairly common species where willows or poplars grow.





Peppered moth

A woodland species that is fairly sparsely distributed through Fife.





Pine beauty

Sparsely distributed in Fife, occurring where pines grow.





Pine carpet

Common where there is extensive pine woodland.





Pink-barred sawfly

Common in broadleaved woodland with sal-
lows or poplars.





Poplar hawkmoth

Common where poplars or willows grow.





Portland moth

A rare and declining species that still has a foothold at Tentsmuir Point. This one was there in early August 2023. The species is associated with creeping willow on sand dunes.





Pretty pinion

This species is towards the southern edge of its range in Fife. This one was at Tentsmuir Point in early August 2023.



Purple bar

Common in any habitat where bedstraws grow.





Purple clay

A common woodland species.





Puss moth

An impressive, large moth that occurs where poplars or willows grow.





Red chestnut

A spring species of open woodland, the red chestnut is not common in Fife. These were at Tentsmuir Point in early April 2023.





Red-green carpet

A common autumn species, and again in spring, when it emerges from hibernation.





Red-line quaker

A common autumn species where willows grow.





Red-necked footman

An uncommon woodland species in Fife. This one was at Morton Lochs in early July 2022.





Red sword-grass

A widely-distributed but scarce species of moorland, rough pasture and damp woodland. These were at Tentsmuir Point in mid-April (above) and mid-March (below).





Riband wave

A common species in a range of habitats.





Rivulet

Common where red campion grows.



Rosy minor

Locally-distributed in grassy habitats.





Rosy rustic

A common late-summer and autumn moth in a range of habitats.





Ruby tiger

A fairly common species in a range of habitats.





Rustic

A common species, occurring in a range of lowland habitats.



Sallow

Common where willows or poplars grow.





Sallow kitten

A scarce species in Fife, occurring where willows or poplars grow. These were at Tentsmuir Point in late June.





Sand dart

A rare species of coastal sand dunes. This one was at Tentsmuir Point in mid-June 2023.



Sandy carpet

A common summer species. Its caterpillars feed on red campion.





Satellite

A common species that overwinters as an adult, and can be recorded on mild nights from October to April.





Scallop shell

An uncommon species of damp woodland. These were at Morton Lochs in July and August 2022.





Scalloped hazel

A common species of woodland.





Setaceous hebrew character

Common in lowland habitats.





Shaded broad-bar

A common species in grassy habitats, and often seen during the day.





Shears

A scarce species in Fife. These were at Tentsmuir Point in May.





Shore wainscot

A rare species that occurs on coastal sand dunes and sandy beaches. These were at Tentsmuir Point in early August 2023.





Shoulder stripe

A spring species, common where dog-roses, its foodplant, occur.





Shoulder striped-wainscot

A species of damp grassland.





Shuttle-shaped dart

A southern species that has spread into Scotland, occurring in a range of habitats.





Silky wainscot

A locally-distributed species of reedbeds.



Silver-ground carpet

Very common in damp places with tall herbaceous vegetation. Often seen during the day.





Silver Y

An abundant migrant moth, occurring in a wide range of habitats. It can sometimes be seen in large numbers during the day at Tentsmuir Point.





Six-spot burnet

A day-flying moth that occurs in areas with flowery grassland. It is numerous at Tentsmuir Point.



Six-striped rustic

A common species, especially in damp woodland and wet meadows.





Slender brindle

A southern woodland species that has spread into Fife.





Small angle shades

A widespread but scarce species in Fife.





Small dotted buff

Fairly common in wet grassland.



Small fan-foot

A common species of broadleaved woodland.



Small fan-footed wave

A common species , mostly in broadleaved woodland.





Small phoenix

Common wherever willowherb grows.





Small rivulet

Common, especially in woodland.





Small square-spot

A common summer species.





Small wainscot

A common species in damp habitats.





Small yellow wave

A rare species, only recorded from a handful of sites in Fife. This one was at Tentsmuir Point in mid-June 2022.





Smoky wainscot

A common grassland species.





Snout

Common wherever nettles grow.





Southern wainscot

A southern species that is now spreading into Fife.





Spectacle

A fairly common species where nettles grow.





Spruce carpet

Common where conifers (not just spruce) grow.





Square-spot rustic

Common where conifers (not just spruce) grow.





Straw dot

This species is becoming more common in Fife, occurring mostly in damp woodland and moorland.





Straw underwing

A scarce coastal species in Fife.





Streak

An autumn species, common in areas where broom grows.





Streamer

A pretty spring species, common where dog-roses occur.





Suspected

A rare species in Fife, associated with birches. This one was at Tentsmuir Point in early August 2023.





Svensson's copper underwing

As with the very similar copper underwing, this species has spread into Fife from the south in recent years, and is now widespread.





Swallow prominent

This species occurs where poplars, willows or sallows grow.



Tawny-barred angle

A common species where conifers grow.





Tawny speckled pug

A relatively common species, occurring in a range of habitats.





True lover's knot

Common in habitats where heather grows.





Twin-spotted quaker

A common early-season species of woodland which is spreading north through Scotland.





Uncertain

Very similar to the rustic. It occurs in a range of habitats.



V-pug

A fairly common species in a range of habitats.



Water carpet

A common species of damp habitats. The darker *piceata* form is shown above and below left.





Welsh wave

A locally-distributed species of moorland and open woodland. These were at Tentsmuir Point.





White ermine

A common summer species.





White-line dart

A locally-distributed species in Fife, occurring on sand-dunes and heathland.





Winter moth

A common woodland species of late autumn and early winter.





Wormwood pug

A fairly common species in a range of habitats.





Yellow-barred brindle

A scarce species of broadleaved woodland. This one was at Tentsmuir Point at the start of May 2022.



Yellow horned

A species that can be found wherever there is birch woodland.





Yellow shell

A widely-distributed species that can be seen during the day.

